

The Outcome Mapping Methodology on the evaluation of the Latin American Trade Network: Monitoring and Evaluating Research Outputs¹

**LATN III
2003 - 2008**

Buenos Aires

Networks are understood in this report as social arrangements or institutions and/or individuals linked together around a common theme or purpose, working jointly but allowing members to maintain their autonomy. Networks allow participants to share knowledge, at the same time that they support policy chains that facilitate learning from country to country. They contribute to contest the crystallization of a policy monopoly. Lindquist² (2001) suggested that 'assessing policy influence is typically about carefully discerning intermediate influences', in particular:

- (a) expanding research capacities of chosen actors to relate to policy issues,
- (b) broadening networks of interaction and exchange, and
- (c) engaging researchers with policy networks.

This approach recognizes that research is located 'upstream' from any kind of actual development 'impact' (Carden and Neilsen³). LATN's boundary partners in previous phases were researchers involved in the knowledge generation process and permanent governmental representatives involved in the decision-making process. Not only they are systematically involved in the negotiation process (at the regional, hemispheric and multilateral levels), in the crafting of the agenda and in the day-to-day activities of policy formulation and implementation. They also enjoy longer term stability in their jobs, being less affected by the frequent political changes of officials at higher levels (Ministries, Secretaries). Therefore, the choice of target implied working at the level at which the project activities and outputs could have greater long term influence.

While in general terms this criterion keeps being relevant for this project, the incorporation of the Outcome Mapping methodology in the elaboration of the proposals and the development of projects has been highly useful to define more precisely the following points:

- ◆ The audience that the project will be directly working with (Boundary Partners);
- ◆ The goals to be pursued (Outcome Challenges);
- ◆ The expected results (Progress Markers), particularly in terms of behavioral changes of the project's partners; and
- ◆ The actions to be developed (Strategy Maps).

In particular, this project attempted to work with and influence three groups of actors, i.e., mid-level policy makers and negotiators, senior policy makers and International Organization's officials and academics. The group of mid-level policy makers had a broader scope than in previous phases, including not only officials from the trade

¹ This report was prepared by Jorgelina Loza, who is in charge of the monitoring and evaluation of LATN through OM methodology. The author acknowledges and thanks for the valorous help of Gabriel Bottino, who contributed to the analysis since the beginning.

² Lindquist, Evert (2001) "Discerning Policy Influence: Framework for a Strategic Evaluation of IDRC-Supported Research". Available at http://www.idrc.ca/uploads/user-S/10359907080discerning_policy.pdf

³ Fred Carden and Stephanie Neilsen (2005) "Confluence and Influence: building policy capacities in research networks" in Diane Stone and Simon Maxwell (comp.) Global Knowledge Networks and International Development: Bridges across Boundaries, Routledge.

government departments but also from other government agencies that have trade-related jurisdiction or are affected by trade policy options (for instance, officials from the Agriculture Ministry or the Education Ministry when, respectively, negotiations on agriculture or educational services are addressed). In this sense, the project made special efforts to bring all mid-level policy makers with policy stakes into the purview of its Boundary Partners. In this way, it expected to give due weight to a question that has been repeatedly singled out as one of the causes of the feeble policy making capabilities throughout most of Latin America, namely, the lack of coordination among concerned public agencies.

Each group of Boundary Partners implies a specific dissemination strategy, as well as specific activities. The proposal therein specified the Outcome Challenges, Progress Markers and Strategy Maps for each group of Boundary Partners to be involved in the project.

It should be stressed that LATN's researchers and the policy-makers/officials the project is concerned with (the "boundary partners") would also be positively influenced by the very fact of their involvement in an autonomous knowledge network increasingly embedded in society. Indeed, as the former projects have clearly shown, working within LATN has allowed researchers the possibility of benefiting from exchanges of multiple-source ideas, cross-fertilization among research endeavors, increasing networking opportunities and access to different types of services ranging from brokering of key information to getting additional funds for their activities. In other words, the network has provided members a value-adding platform to their efforts for developing or cementing their professional standing. In turn, as explicitly acknowledged by some external participants in the network's activities, they have benefited from a neutral space where independent thinking is valued and fostered, and where different stakeholders find easier to communicate more freely, informally and productively.

Finally, as in previous phases, the project had a more "distant" or indirect set of users and beneficiaries from different communities, namely, scholars, members of the private sector, social organizations and journalists who accessed the research outputs through electronic means.

The OM approach allows LATN to take account of the real changes favored by the network's activities and research findings, and to identify the different kinds of influence on each partner. On evaluating research outputs, OM is useful as it is a flexible tool and enables the researchers to evaluate the relevance of their efforts in a complex context. The research work is, usually, focused on designing solutions rather than implementing them, so applying OM presents difficulties: "The challenge researchers face in OM application is how to show how their targeted benefiting communities will benefit from their work" (Nyangaga⁴). The range of actors involved in a research project, as well as the great scope of political interests challenge the ability of researchers in assessing the impacts of their work.

OM helps to engage researchers work with stakeholders linking effectively the generation of knowledge and the decision making process. Using OM as the monitoring approach of their projects, researchers can map out progress as their products are taken into account to make decisions. In each of the phases of the continuous research process, researchers should identify partners who support their

⁴ Nyangaga, Julius (2008) "Outcome Mapping in research" in Outcome Mapping Learning Community Newsletter, Spring 2008. Available at http://www.outcomemapping.ca/download.php?file=/resource/files/simonhearn_en_OMnewsletter_spring08.pdf

efforts, help test their outputs and address possible constraints to their outputs application. Researchers need to go beyond their planned activities in order to achieve their long term goals, and to understand their real capacity of influence the complex social system they are embedded in.

This report summarizes the monitoring and evaluation of the activities of the Coordination Unit and the Nodes during the last half of LATN III. Its objectives are to assess on one hand the influence of the network's activities on each group of boundary partners and, on the other hand, the completion of the outcome challenges outlined on the proposal of LATN 3.

OUTCOME MAPPING PROGRAMME FRAMEWORK

Vision

In Latin America, trade negotiators and policy makers count on high-quality academic research to take informed decisions. Institutional spaces and instances for fluid interaction and debate among scholars, governments and civil society groups are well developed and so there is a shared sense of entitlement and assertiveness over international trade policies. Academic production is fluid, locally embedded and problem-oriented, addressing many of the technicalities of issues under negotiation as well as strategic policy decisions and global governance challenges. Governments are able to use research findings to assess the costs and benefits of alternative negotiating positions, experiment with new ideas and flesh out proposals informed by sound domestic development policies. Trade negotiations are considered to be an instrument for cooperation and development. Knowledge networks have emerged and consolidated as independent and self-sustaining multi-stakeholder organizations. They are capable of producing policy-relevant research outputs, catalyzing the agenda and shaping its boundaries, while developing synergies across multilateral, regional and bilateral trade strategies.

Mission

The project will broaden trade negotiation capacity in Latin American countries by producing problem-driven research and consolidating LATN as a mechanism for knowledge generation and diffusion. The project will fully involve key stakeholders in the identification of research needs, the production of knowledge and the strategic use of research outputs. Relying on LATN researchers and working closely with mid-level policy-makers, the project will provide analysis that spell out policy alternatives in sensitive regulatory areas and data-intensive research on the costs and benefits of negotiating proposals submitted at the multilateral and hemispheric levels. The project will also assemble a small working group formed by senior policy makers from Argentina, Brazil, Chile, ACN and Central America, and officials from the WTO, IADB, ECLAC and the WB to identify major problems with existing trade international governance and discuss potential processes and mechanisms for improvement.

The project will decentralize the network's governance system, define more clearly their membership and partners and adopt new organizational practices. By doing so, the project expects to make the generation of knowledge more socially robust, turn linkages with decision-making circles thicker and more dynamic, and diversify the sources for the network's growth. Finally, the project will develop a customized diffusion strategy in order to improve the effectiveness of its outreach. In sum, by enhancing the policy-relevance of research while using and strengthening LATN, the project will contribute to prepare Latin American countries for a meaningful participation in trade negotiations and a development-consistent insertion in the world trading system.

1. Negotiators and Mid-level Policy Makers

LATN aims to influence this boundary partner on:

- Using appropriate data and pondering costs and benefits when making decisions
- Acknowledging the importance of high-level quality research to reach more enlightened decisions
- Realizing the importance of interacting with researchers in order to obtain more problem-oriented research
- Using the project's outputs (LATN Working Papers and Briefs) to assess costs and benefits
- Considering the project's meetings (LATN Annual Conference, LATN Breakfasts and LATN thematic meetings) as privileged spaces for interaction with researchers and with N&PMs from other countries in the region
- Framing more consultative decision making processes, including among other actors the community of researchers
- Crafting negotiation proposals that take due care of development needs

Outcome challenge

The project intends to see Latin American N&PMs using appropriate data, assessing costs and benefits of trade negotiating proposals and policy options when taking decisions. N&PMs recognize the importance of a closer interaction with researchers and N&PMs of other countries in the region. N&PMs acknowledge the importance of research to take informed decisions and use the project's research outputs (LATN's Working Papers and Briefs) to assess pros and cons. They consider the project's meetings (LATN Annual Conference, LATN Breakfasts and LATN thematic meetings) as a privileged space for interaction. N&PMs adjust the policymaking process to actively include the research community, among other actors. As the interaction with researchers increases, research becomes more problem-oriented while its results are more easily and directly used by N&PMs. As a result, N&PMs are able to craft negotiation proposals that take due care of development needs.

Graduated Progress Markers

Expect to See N&PMs

1. Become receptive, capable to work with researchers
2. Assist LATN meetings and actively engage in discussions
3. Use the LATN Weekly Selection of News extensively to be informed
4. Use LATN Briefs as inputs for government's discussion or as an aide-memoir in negotiations or as a handout to political authorities unfamiliar with the technicalities and policy implications of the issue under negotiation.
5. Use LATN's Working Papers only if it is the N&PMs' particular area of work

Like to See N&PM

6. Use appropriate data and assess costs and benefits of negotiation proposals and policy options
7. Eager to share data and needs with researchers

8. Interact fluidly with researchers and /or civil society actors
9. Count on LATN's local researchers as resource persons
10. Influence other policy makers to count on the project's research outputs (LATN Working Papers and Briefs)
11. Generate formal instances for public-private interaction

Love to See N&PM

12. Actively back and encourage academic research on policy problems through knowledge networks
13. Consult researchers before and while drafting negotiating positions

Strategy Maps

Outcome Challenge: Negotiators and Mid-Level Policy Makers			
<p>The project intends to see Latin American countries' negotiators and mid-level policy makers (N&PMs) using appropriate data, pondering costs and benefits of trade negotiating proposals and policy options when taking decisions. Also, they recognize the importance of a closer interaction with researchers and N&PMs of other countries of the region. N&PMs acknowledge the importance of research to take informed decisions and use the project 's research outputs (LATN' s Working Papers, Briefs and Reports) to ponder pros and cons. They consider the project' s meetings (LATN Annual Conference, LATN Breakfasts and LATN thematic meetings) as a privileged space for interaction. N&PMs adjust the policy making process to actively include the research community, among other actors. As the interaction with researchers increase, research becomes more problem oriented while its results are more easily and directly used by N&MPs. As a result, N&PMs are able to craft negotiation proposals that take due care of their countries' development needs.</p>			
Strategy	Causal	Persuasive	Supportive
Strategy and Activities aimed at the Boundary Partner	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finance their participation in LATN training activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide data-intensive problem oriented research. Provide research that ponders costs and benefits of negotiating proposals and policy options in regulatory areas. Organize <i>Write-shops</i> (researchers + policy makers, Work over the researchers' work/findings) <i>Breakfast meetings</i> (researchers + policy makers) Policy Makers talk on their problems and visions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Distribution of LATN BRIEFS</i> (to all LATN mailing list of N&PMs) <i>Distribution of LATN Working Papers</i> (Printed version by mail or by hand in meetings to those directly working on the issue and by electronic means to all the LATN mailing list of N&PMs) Personal Contact with N&PMs (e-mails and phone calls) <i>Regular e-communication of relevant activities and news in the trade field.</i> <i>LATN Newsletters' Selection</i> (weekly)

Strategy and Activities aimed at the Boundary Partner's environment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Availability of the Web-site</i> • Availability of services through the web-site: Trade conflicts and barriers up-dated information. 	<i>Organization of the LATN Annual Meeting</i> (visibility + dissemination + interaction among stakeholders)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Virtual Media Guide • <i>LATN Newsletter Selection</i> (weekly)
--	--	--	--

Note: strategies and activities in italics are common to another boundary partner, although a different result is expected for each boundary partner

1.1 Andean Node

Actors involved:

There has been an exchange of views and they have established a dialogue with:

- Public organisms' functionaries
- Local and regional governments' authorities
- Political representatives (Congress members, advisors and former Congress members)
- Civil Society Organizations (Producers associations, Traders associations, Environmental associations)
- Academic Researchers
- Entrepreneurs' Unions

Contributing factors and actors:

- Previous development of links between LATN and policy makers and researchers
- LATN financial support for the diffusion of the event and for the elaboration of papers and technical reports
- Financial support from participating institutions or organisms (for meetings expenses and publications)
- Support in organization, diffusion and logistics from participating institutions

Source of evidence:

- Graphical material
- The list of participants
- Video recording of meetings
- Audio recording of the discussion
- Presentations at the events, carried out by policymakers, researchers and local management
- Publication of the event results (book)

Lessons and required program changes/reactions:

From the analysis of the thematic meetings and events organized by the Andean Node, it can be said that the objectives were accomplished in several areas:

- The strengthening of the personal and institutional bonds with researchers, civil society, and especially with the new parliamentary representation. The themes of the meetings (as the inter-oceanic road, the commercial agreement between Peru and Chile, the FTA with USA) were crucial for attendants to the events.
- The link between LATN'S prior subject lines (as services and intellectual property rights) was reinforced in some of the events, given the variety of attendants.
- The wide spectrum of (polarized) positions – for example, between FTA official negotiators and academics appeared clear in these meetings. Also, the different visions on Andean and South American integration and its objectives came into light.
- LATN regional visibility (as sponsors and exponents) was achieved.

1.2 Nodo Brazil

Actors involved:

- Public organisms' functionaries

- Local and regional governments' authorities
- Political representatives (Congress members, advisors and former Congress members)
- Civil Society Organizations (Business associations, Environmental associations, Consumer's associations)
- Academic Researchers

Description of change:

As in previous stages, the focus of the Brazilian Node was put on generating high-quality policy oriented research on strategic issues related to trade policy and negotiations and, in particular, to issues linking trade and development. New issues as the distributional impacts of the bilateral trade with China and the implications of IT for the trade and negotiation agendas were brought into debate through technical during this stage.

The Brazilian Node has also focused, on issues related to South American integration through the elaboration of briefs, organization of seminars and coordination of a task force on that issue.

LATN is making efforts to bring governmental negotiators and policy-makers to its meetings. Among these partners, high-level policy-oriented research has reached wide acceptance (and some relevant use) of findings and outputs.

Contributing factors and actors:

- The support of CINDES for the logistics of the events
- The support of CINDES and the RBCE for the wide diffusion of papers and briefs.
- Relations with research institutions in Brazil (FUNCEX, CINDES and CEBRI)
- Previous development of links between LATN and policy makers and researchers

Source of evidence:

- The list of participants
- Presentations at the events, carried out by public sector functionaries, researchers and local management
- Publication of the event results (book)
- Publication of articles in the economic press, presenting findings and outputs of LATN's papers and policy briefs.

Lessons and required program changes/reactions:

The main lessons emerging from the meetings and other events refer to:

- The difficulties to reach the government negotiators in a context of political polarization on trade policies and negotiations.
- The need to evaluate the mechanisms from an institutional strategy based on (i) generation of high-quality policy-oriented research; and (ii) cooperation and partnership with established and prestigious think tanks in Brazil.

1.3 Central American Node

Actors involved:

- Public organisms' functionaries

- Local and regional governments' authorities
- Civil Society Organizations (Business associations, Environmental associations, consumers associations)
- Academic Researchers

Description of change:

The focus was on generating high-quality policy oriented research on strategic issues related to trade policy and negotiations. New issues as the distributional impacts of CAFTA and the implications of TICs for the trade and negotiation agendas were brought into debate through meetings and technical papers.

The Central American Node has also focused on issues related to its regional integration through the elaboration of briefs and organization of multi sector seminars, especially including government negotiators and policy-makers in its meetings. One of the most important changes, in this way, was to deep the analysis on the custom union creation, sharing experiences of each country.

Among these partners, high-level policy-oriented research has reached wide acceptance (and some relevant use) of findings and outputs. From one of these events, several proposals and recommendations for negotiations emerged. A strong bond was build with private sector as with researchers.

Contributing factors and actors:

- The support of Universidad de Costa Rica for the logistics of the events
- The support of IICA for the wide diffusion of papers, briefs and other publications.
- Relationships with research institutions in Costa Rica
- Previous development of links among LATN and policy makers and researchers.

Source of evidence:

- The list of participants
- Presentations at the events, carried out by public sector functionaries, researchers and local management
- Publication of the event results (books and briefs)

Lessons and required program changes/reactions:

The mains lessons emerging from the meetings and other events refer to:

- The strengthening of the personal and institutional bond with researchers, civil society, and especially with the new parliamentary representation.
- The collaboration of all actors in times of crucial political decisions on trade and regional integration.
- The increase of LATN regional visibility, and the building of a regional space of convergence between sectors, to analyze emerging issues.

2. Senior and Junior Researchers specialized in trade and development in Latin America

- Producing problem-oriented research.
- Recognizing the need for interaction with negotiators and policy makers to fine-tune the research process and outputs

- Acknowledging the significance of communication and dialogue with other social actors, such as NGOs and business associations
- Conceding importance to research outputs' format and dissemination to make results clear and available to society
- Valuing LATN as a distinctive mode of knowledge generation and dissemination and thus, participating actively in meetings, offering research results to non-members, generating new research initiatives and lines of inquiry

Outcome challenge:

The project seeks to see scholars producing problem-oriented research. They recognize the need for inter-action with negotiators and policy makers in order to fine-tune the problems and questions to be tackled down as well as research outputs. They acknowledge the importance of sharing and getting feedback from a broader community, including NGOs and business associations working in the trade field in order to make knowledge socially robust. Academics recognize the importance of active dissemination of research results in appropriate format, to make them understandable and accessible. Academics value LATN, the regional network of scholars supported by the project, as a distinctive mode for knowledge generation/diffusion. They participate in events as LATN members and pass on research outputs to non-members. Academics are sources of new research initiatives, lines of inquiry and identification of knowledge gaps.

Graduated Progress Markers

Expect to See Academics

1. Become receptive, able to work more closely with negotiators and policy makers
2. Produce problem oriented research
3. Actively participate in events and meetings and discuss ideas in constructive ways

Like to See Academics

4. Interact fluidly with negotiators and policy makers, recognizing their contribution to research
5. Share research findings and get feedback from the broader community, including NGOs and business associations
6. Recognize the importance of format and dissemination of research results to make them understandable and available
7. Value LATN, the project and the network, as a distinctive means of knowledge generation and diffusion.

Love to See Academics

8. Fully committed to produce problem oriented research (i.e. identifying knowledge gaps and proposing lines of inquiry)
9. Fully engaged in strengthening the network (i.e. bringing new research initiatives)
10. Actively disseminate their research results within the broader community

Strategy Map

Outcome Challenge: Academics

The project intends to see academics producing problem-oriented research. They recognize the need for interaction with negotiators and policy makers in order to desegregate problems and questions to be tackled down as well as research outputs. They acknowledge the importance of sharing and getting feedback from a broader community, including NGOs and business associations working in the trade field in order to make knowledge socially robust. Academics recognize the importance of active dissemination of research results in appropriate format in order to make them understandable and accessible. Academics value LATN, the regional network of scholars supported by the project, as a distinctive mode for knowledge generation and dissemination. They participate in events and activities as LATN members and pass on the project's research outputs to non-members. Academics are sources of new research initiatives, lines of inquiry and identification of knowledge gaps.

Strategy	Causal	Persuasive	Supportive
Strategy and activities aimed at the Boundary Partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify and work with senior researchers working on trade issues in the region, concerned with development, interested in establishing costs and benefits of policy options and committed to include in the research production process other actors' considerations. Identify and work with young researchers trained in data-intensive research. Financially support problem oriented research to be carried out through an interactive process with negotiators and policy makers Intense monitoring over research production processes to enhance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Breakfast Meetings</i> (Researchers + policy makers) Negotiator/ Policy maker share problems and visions. <i>Write shops</i> (Researchers + policy makers) Work over researcher's findings. Support for participation in meetings addressing research needs (such as UNCTAD's or FAO's). Support for publication 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strong assistance through fluid feedback on the appropriate framing of research questions and outputs Brokering relevant information for conducting policy research Offering networking opportunities

	its problem-oriented approach and policy relevance		
Strategy and Activities aimed at the Boundary Partners' environment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Availability of the web site</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>LATN Annual Meeting</i> (visibility + dissemination + interaction with stakeholders) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>LATN News Selection</i> <i>Dissemination of LATN WP, Briefs and Reports</i> (Each product goes to a specific audience, ie.WP go to negotiators and policy makers directly working on the issue at stake) Virtual Media Guide

Note: Strategies and activities in Italics are common to another boundary partner, although different results are expected for each boundary partner.

2.1 Andean Node

Description of change:

The effort of systematizing impact studies on intellectual property rights in the FTAs with USA and to include the distributional element, considering the impact on potential family expenses that might be affected.

Given the importance of biodiversity and traditional knowledge, the goal was to describe the prevailing judicial order in Peru and other countries of Latin America, as well as the commitments adopted in different international forums. We stood out the bond between intellectual property and biological diversity making a comparative analysis and a balance of countries and forums.

There was also implemented the objective of strengthening bonds with the Intellectual Property regulating organism (INDECOP), the environment regulating organism (CONAM) and instances of the General Secretariat working on the subject.

One objective was to form an academic opinion on the Investment Chapters in FTAs signed by Colombia and Peru with USA, and to analyze the changes that those regulations will represent for the Andean Normative and investment treatment between Andean partners. In that sense, we look for identifying the space left for national policy after the subscription to that international agreements.

The studies commissioned by LATN searched for an integral view, and it is expected to contribute as an income to the negotiations developed on that subject. It complements, for example, the studies made by the ACN, MERCOSUR and LAIA Secretariats on the convergence or not between ACN and MERCOSUR investment chapters.

The node intends to advance the creation of bonds with Venezuela for the evaluation of trade relations and economic repercussions between China and the Andean countries. This implies analyzing competitiveness and trade, rentability and savings, investments and economic impacts.

Contributing factors & actors

- Previous development of links between LATN and researchers, and policy makers.
- LATN financial support for the commission of papers and technical reports, and the diffusion of events.
- Financial support from participating institutions or organisms (for meetings expenses and publications)
- Support in organization, diffusion and logistics from participating institutions

Source of evidence:

- The list of participants of the events
- The presence of relevant experts, and representatives of public sector
- The publication of the policy briefs made for the events

Lessons and required programs changes/reactions:

Main lesson refers to cooperation and partnership with established and prestigious think tanks, and regional researchers. These bonds have allowed a good diffusion of

the events and their products. The researchers appeared to be willing to share points of view on emerging themes, and to incorporate them into their agenda.

2.2. Brazilian Node

Description of change:

LATN Brazil worked in strong cooperation with think tanks like FUNCEX, CEBRI and CINDES, each of which has its own network and is well inserted in the trade policy-related environment. These cooperation relationships have allowed LATN a sound integration in the trade policy-environment in Brazil.

The meetings and seminars organized by LATN in Brazil focused on issues viewed as relevant from a “policy-oriented research” point of view. They put together senior and junior researchers as well as university students, NGOs and civil society representatives.

The publications produced by LATN in Brazil have been presented in the 2006 LATN Annual Meeting and are available, together with the policy briefs, in CINDES webpage.

Contributing factors & actors

LATN facilitated the participation of senior researchers covering their travel and accommodation expenses to participate in the 2006 plenary meeting and the seminars organized during this period.

Beyond that, partnership with Brazilian institutions like CINDES, CEBRI and FUNCEX gave a strong contribution to assuring a wide diffusion of the events among the public targeted and their outputs. This partnership also plays a relevant role in reducing, for LATN, the costs of organizing, holding and diffusing the meetings.

Source of evidence:

- List of participants of the events.
- Presence of relevant experts, diplomats, businessmen and NGOs representatives at the events.
- Publication of the Policy Briefs made for the events

Lessons & required program changes/reactions:

Main lesson refers to cooperation and partnership with established and prestigious think tanks in Brazil. This has helped reduce costs of entry for LATN in the country and, at the same time, allowed a good diffusion of the events and their products.

2.3 Central American Node

Description of change:

A strong interest on agricultural and trade policies has strengthened the bonds with the IICA, and several joint activities were developed since the signature in 2005 of a cooperation agreement. Some papers were published as the result of common concerns, and the IICA has also support the books publication.

The activities of the node during this stage allowed keeping relevance at the analysis of the sub regional reality and the creation of the Custom Union for Central America, as well as the association agreement with the EU. The urgency of those issues for the region favoured the links built with researchers and stakeholders, giving the opportunity of broadening the joint production in the future.

The participation of these researchers on the public debate gave LATN more visibility and its work was used as inputs of seminars and for recommendations made by stakeholders.

Contributing factors & actors

- Previous development of links between LATN and researchers, and policy makers.
- LATN financial support for the commission of papers and technical reports, and the diffusion of events.
- Financial support from participating institutions or organisms (for meetings expenses and publications)
- Support in organization, diffusion and logistics from participating institutions

Source of evidence:

- The list of participants of the events
- The publication of books gathering the papers introduced at the events
- The presence of relevant experts, and representatives of public sector

Lessons and required programs changes/reactions:

Main lesson refers to cooperation and partnership with established and prestigious researchers and think tanks in the region. This has helped LATN to gain visibility by increasing its production, allowing a very good diffusion of the events and their products.

3. Organizational Practices

The LATN work team has incorporated some practices in order to improve the completion of their objectives and to create a comfortable working atmosphere.

The Organizational Practices refer to those activities thought to reach the Vision established at the beginning of the project from the daily activities of those involved in the project.

On the development of the project, other practices that are related to the working atmosphere rather than the academic objectives of the network were added. In an internal workshop of the the Coordination Unit⁵, it was decided to strengthen those spaces for interaction and exchange of impressions and experiences. It was also decided to facilitate the internal circulation of the research advances of each member of the UC, fostering the individual learning and academic growth.

⁵ Internal Workshop on Outcome Mapping, FLACSO Argentina, September 2007.

ORGANIZATIONAL PRACTICES

Practices	Main Actions
Prospecting for new ideas, opportunities and resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Increase institutionalization and formalization of ties when required for network links to be operational. ▪ Develop new links with strategic relevant regional institutions (i.e BCIE, CAF) ▪ Expand Project's outreach to include small countries (Bolivia and Paraguay) and not covered areas (CARICOM) ▪ Develop synergies with ASIES in Central America and MERCOSUR network. ▪ Explore renewal of funding support from institutions the Project is or has been working with. ▪ Map out new public and private funding alternatives and define priority lists of donors to be targeted. ▪ Develop a Project sales pitch for donors employing different instruments (institutional brochures, institutional presentations, invitation to Project's events)
Seeking feedback from main sources of information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Peer review of the Project's research work by outstanding scholars. ▪ Present research work in international forum and seminars ▪ Seek feedback on capacity building activities from key NGOs.
Obtained support of next highest power	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Keep authorities of the institutions hosting the Project informed on goals, activities and results.

Assessing and (re)designing products, services and procedures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Increase participation of the Project's Steering Committee into the decision making process and activities' oversight. ▪ Implement a new methodology to allow the project to better establish its intention and strategies, and monitoring and assessing its performance and organizational behavior. ▪ Fine-tune the project's outreach strategy by tailoring means to disseminate research outputs according to products involved and targeted audience. ▪ Redefine the profile of the Network Plenary Meeting as an instance of increasing visibility.
Checking up on those already served to add value	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Expand survey to assess and get suggestions from boundary partners on capacity building products. ▪ Obtain feedback from the WB and IADB on research work they commissioned to the Project.
Sharing your best wisdom with the world	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Make freely available research products in the web. ▪ Publish research findings in a user friendly format. ▪ Participate in international meetings.
Experimenting to remain innovative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Implement decentralization of the governance system to Nodes in Central America, the Andean Community of Nations and Brazil. ▪ Assign responsibility to nodes for developing new lines of research, activities and financing. ▪ Explore the possibility of increasing the outreach through the media
Engaging in organizational	

reflection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Hold evaluation and planning internal meetings involving the Steering Committee (every six months) ▪ Keep constant communication between the Project Coordination Unit and the sub regional nodes.
------------	---

Annex I

LATN Plenary Meeting – Buenos Aires 2005

LATN Plenary Meeting is one of the network's most important actions, included in its strategy maps. It is directed to our boundary partners' context, as negotiators, academics and policy makers.

This meeting is held every year in a different city, where our researchers are located. It is organized around a central theme, and the presentation of the results and production on traditional research lines of the network. The annual meeting represents a very important opportunity to increase LATN visibility in national contexts and to strengthen bonds with researchers, policy makers and institutions.

Outcome challenges

1. About boundary partners

- ✓ Negotiators and policy makers consider LATN meetings as a privileged space for interaction with academics and stakeholders.
- ✓ Negotiators and policy makers are more receptive towards other works
- ✓ Negotiators and policy makers assist and participate in LATN meetings

2. About the network

- ✓ Give more visibility to the products (dissemination) and network members (networking opportunities)
- ✓ Promote a space for deep discussion of ongoing research
- ✓ Promote links between network's regional agenda and local phenomena and particularities.
- ✓ Strengthen the network's participation capacity (and influence) in the national policy formulation process
- ✓ Consolidate the high profile of the network's academic level through an appropriate selection of substantive themes for the debate.

Strategy

- ✓ Select the institutional partners that will work together with LATN in the diffusion of the meeting, as a way of facilitating the participation of negotiators and policy makers.
- ✓ Select high profile speakers at public opinion
- ✓ Create a mix of closed meetings for deep discussion of LATN's academic work, and open sessions.
- ✓ Give financial support for a qualified number of participants that aren't members of LATN
- ✓ Include in sessions the negotiators and policy makers invited.
- ✓ Elaborate a provocative agenda by the selection of issues and the proposed discussions.